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# What is EQIP?

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a new voluntary USDA program to help farmers establish conservation practices to protect soil, water and other natural resources. EQIP focuses technical, educational and financial assistance primarily to farms in locally-identified priority areas. It also offers assistance statewide for significant conservation concerns.

EQIP offers farmers costsharing and technical help to install or implement structural, vegetative, and management practices through 5- to 10-year contracts.

Other USDA programs, such as the Conservation Reserve Program, and state and local programs provide additional tools for producers to care for our private lands - a shared commitment between public and private interests to solve our natural resource concerns.

## What Types of Conservation Practices Are Eligible?

Landowners work with local NRCS or county land conservationists to develop 5-10 year contracts providing costsharing, and for some practices, incentive payments as well.

- grassed waterways
- filter or buffer strips
- manure management practices
- sealing abandoned wells
- erosion control dams
- barnyard runoff control systems
- streambank protection practices
- many more structural and management practices

# Payments

Landowners can be reimbursed for up to 75% of the cost of the practices needed. Incentive payments may be made to encourage a producer to try certain land management practices such as nutrient management, manure management, integrated pest management, and wildlife habitat management. These incentive payments may be provided for up to three years to encourage producers to try farm management practices they may not otherwise use without the program incentive.

Maximum payment is \$10,000 per person per year, with a \$50,000 maximum for the life of the contract.

# Who is Eligible?

Any person who produces agricultural commodities, including livestock, crops, orchards, pasture or other products, and who owns or controls the land, is eligible to participate.

Any land that is used to produce agricultural commodities, such as cropland, pasture, forest or other land on which crops or livestock are produced, is eligible.

Large confined livestock operations (>1,000 animal units) are not eligible for cost-sharing on animal waste storage or treatment facilities. However, technical and financial assistance for other resource issues may be available.



# Plum Creek Watershed

*The Plum Creek Watershed* in Pepin and Pierce Counties is one of 21 watersheds selected this year as an EQIP priority area in Wisconsin. The Plum Creek EQIP Project will be funded at \$1.1 million over five years starting in 1998.

## Why Participate?

Landowners in Pepin and Pierce Counties have expressed concerns about water quality, pollution of the Plum Creek, Nugget Lake, Silver Birch Lake, wetland protection, manure management, pesticides getting into water systems, erosion, the importance of protecting our drinking water, and improving wildlife habitat. This project gives you, the landowner, the opportunity to address these concerns on your land. The success of this program is in your hands, as the landowners of the *Plum Creek Watershed*.

## What is Our Goal?

The overall goal is to reduce the sediment and nutrients flowing into all receiving waters in the *Plum Creek Watershed*. This will improve our water quality and habitat for fish and wildlife.

*Using the Resources.  
Saving the Future.*

# Need More Information?

What types of conservation practices are you interested in implementing? Contact the USDA Service Center:

**Natural Resources Conservation Service  
or the Land Conservation Department**

**Pepin County**  
Durand, Wisconsin  
(715)672-8665

**Pierce County**  
Ellsworth, Wisconsin  
(715)273-6763

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